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**An Act To Allow the Use of Public Funds for the Repair
and Maintenance of Private Roads and Bridges and To
Ensure Public Access to the Seboomook Lake Region**

Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:

Sec. 1. 12 MRSA §1803, sub-§5, as enacted by PL 1997, c. 678, §13, is amended to read:

5. Distribution of information. At the expense of the State, may cause copies of sections or parts of sections of this chapter and of other laws of the State relating to the administration of public lands to be printed and freely distributed. The bureau may prepare tracts or circulars of information on the administration of public lands, which must be available for distribution; and

Sec. 2. 12 MRSA §1803, sub-§6, as amended by PL 2001, c. 604, §3, is further amended to read:

6. Rules. From time to time shall adopt, amend, repeal and enforce reasonable rules necessary to carry out the duties assigned to it, including, but not limited to, rules:

A. For the protection and preservation of state parks, historic sites, the Allagash Wilderness Waterway, public boating facilities owned or managed by the bureau, submerged lands, public reserved lands and nonreserved public lands;

B. For the protection and safety of the public;

C. For observance of the conditions and restrictions, expressed in deeds of trust or otherwise, of the state parks, historic sites, the Allagash Wilderness Waterway, public boating facilities owned or managed by the bureau, submerged lands, public reserved lands and nonreserved public lands of the State and of monuments thereon; and

D. For preservation of the natural beauty, historic integrity and character of the Allagash Wilderness Waterway.

All rules of the bureau must be adopted in accordance with Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter H:2; and

Sec. 3. 12 MRSA §1803, sub-§7 is enacted to read:

7. Public access. For the purpose of providing public access, may, with the consent of the commissioner and agreement of the owners, repair and maintain, or cause to be repaired and maintained, a private road, private way or bridge to provide motor vehicle access to:

A. Nonreserved public lands;

B. Public reserved lands; or

C. Private lands on which an easement guaranteeing public access for recreational uses is held.

Sec. 4. Access to the Seboomook Lake region; direction to the Department of Conservation. The Department of Conservation shall negotiate an agreement with owners of land along an approximately 13-mile section of Northern Road in Soldiertown Township, West Middlesex Canal Grant and Pittston Academy Grant in Somerset County for the repair and maintenance of this segment of Northern Road to facilitate year-round motor vehicle access to lands managed by the Department of Conservation, Bureau of Parks and Lands in the Seboomook Lake region and to Pittston Farm.

The Department of Conservation shall pursue exhaustively all opportunities to negotiate an agreement with landowners by participating in any process by which an agreement might reasonably be solicited and obtained.

SUMMARY

For the purpose of providing public access, this bill authorizes the Department of Conservation, Bureau of Parks and Lands to repair and maintain, or cause to be repaired and maintained, a private road, private way or bridge to provide motor vehicle access to nonreserved public lands, public reserved lands or private lands on which an easement guaranteeing public access for recreational uses is held. The bill also directs the Department of Conservation to negotiate an agreement with owners of land along an approximately 13-mile section of Northern Road in Somerset County for the purpose of providing year-round motor vehicle access to public lands in the Seboomook Lake region and to historic Pittston Farm, which is on the National Register of Historic Places.